## JANFEB - Agamben K

## Regular NC Shells

### Short NC (2:15)

#### Gun control creates a state of exception, where freedom is subordinate to security, and the sovereign resides outside the law in the name of law itself—the state of the exception has become the rule because of the aff’s fear-based politics

**Klemash 13**

Andrew Klemash (American University). “Morality in Political Rhetoric: Examining the Effects of Moral Language in Debate Using the Contemporary Gun Control Controversy.” Honors Capstone. May 7th, 2013. <http://aladinrc.wrlc.org/bitstream/handle/1961/15042/Klemash,%20Andrew%20-%20Spring%202013.pdf?sequence=1>

A more elaborate examination of what has led to the acceptance of more restrictions on Mill’s pure liberty in the United States and how it relates to the gun control debate will first have to examine what security exceptions to liberties entails. The central question relevant to gun control is: is there a security concern that is important enough to allow legislation to override the current liberties and rights governing the possession and use of firearms? More broadly put, the question becomes one of a proposed state of exception that the pro-gun control advocates claim exists.66 States of exception are ambiguous political and judicial periods where a governing authority institutes laws that override rights or liberties the society previously enjoyed because of a situation that has emerged that requires fast action or harsh action in order to prevent further harm.67 While it seems similar to emergency powers such as those traditionally considered or granted in times of war, the state of exception is not limited by a wartime application. A compelling description and analysis of the state of exception as a concept in modern governmental practice is given by Giorgio Agamben, where the state of exception is loosely described as a byproduct of necessity: “the state of necessity, on which the exception is founded, cannot have a juridical form.”68 From necessity springs the state of exception, which cannot be a part of the law because it is not responsible to any law but rather to the circumstances of the necessity. This hierarchical dominance and elevation over enshrined juridical procedure present an issue that Agamben explores quite thoroughly. The state of exception is harder to define than it is to recognize in practice. While defined rather ambiguously as “a ‘point of imbalance between public law and political fact’ that is situated – like civil war, insurrection and resistance – in an ‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection of the legal and the political’” 69 it is quite easily recognized in history as moments where, when facing great crisis, nations have allowed governmental power to supersede rights and liberties of the people in favor of increased power, ostensibly temporary and for the protection of the nation. In a way, declarations of war (including the ‘war on terror’) could be considered states of exception, for the normal laws, codes, and rights of people are suspended and replaced by wartime law and codes which are applied to other nations for the good of world order. An examination of the United States’ relationship with the state of exception on a domestic scale is necessary to further understand why in the name of collective security the individual gun owner’s previous rights may be restricted. 67 Agamben, 2. 68 Ibid, 1. 69 Ibid 1 Klemash 38 One need not go very far back into the history of the U.S. to find the state of exception. Although it would be easy (and correct) to point to Civil War policies under Lincoln in the 1860s or the Japanese internment camps during World War II as examples, there are other, more contemporary, examples more applicable to the gun control situation. Agamben states the example best: “The immediate biopolitical significance of the state of exception as the original structure in which law encompasses living beings by means of its own suspension emerges clearly in the ‘military order’ issued by the president of the United States on November 13, 2001, which authorized the ‘indefinite detention’ and trial by ‘military commissions’ … of noncitizens suspected of involvement in terrorist activities.” 70 He is of course referencing the USA Patriot Act that this nation passed in the wake of the horrific terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This act was a state of exception created in order to respond to the terrorist threat which had killed over 3,000 Americans in the span of a day. It was passed quickly by Congress and it changed the way the country operated legally. The Patriot Act was introduced in the House on October 23 and passed on October 24, then passed by the Senate on October 24, and signed into law by President George W. Bush on October 26, 2001, and no other legislation of such importance has ever been passed so quickly by Congress. With its passage, many rights that Americans enjoy as enshrined pillars of liberty such as the right to a fair trial, to a trial by jury, to not be held without charges indefinitely, have all been suspended for those we label ‘terrorist’, and the American people largely condoned it at the time of its passing. In the atmosphere immediately following 9/11, and even today, there is a clear “us” and “them” rhetoric working to galvanize society in the face of uncertainty, so much so that public opinion and sentiment in the US has come to accept that when invoked, “them” or the other are always morally evil, and thus ‘they’ need to be dealt with immediately, even if it 70 Agamben,. 3. Klemash 39 means disregarding the rights and liberties that we hold that all men created equal are entitled to.71 Essentially, the passage of the law “radically erases any legal status of the individual, thus producing a legally unnamable and unclassifiable being” that Americans, the “us” may treat without concern or regard for the law. The curious thing about the USA Patriot Act signed into law in 2001 is that it is still on the books as of now, in 2013. However, this staying power is typical for states of exception, and it is exactly what those who oppose increased governmental powers in the name of security fear.72 Directly before mentioning the USA Patriot Act, Agamben describes the state of exception of the Third Reich that lasted twelve years, and both examples illustrate his point that “the state of exception tends increasingly to appear as the dominant paradigm of government in contemporary politics.”73 The connection between the Third Reich and the Patriot Act by Agamben is deliberate, but not as a comparison of policy, to make the point clear that the state of exception where the normal rules and laws are suspended is being accepted more and more by people in the name of security due to fear. The state of exception, in other words, has become the rule, and the rhetoric of fear has made this possible. 74 Fear of the Japanese led to their internment in camps; fear of terrorist attacks caused the Patriot Act’s creation; and fear causes citizens to seek gun control legislation and also to reject it.

**Politics sustains itself through exclusion, there’s no hope for the aff’s reformism. The state of exception is a manifestation of bare life, the view that subjects must first possess certain arbitrary qualities before they get the rights of a citizen. This is the framework of genocide.**

**Ziarek 12**

Ewa Ziarek (Julian Park Professor of Comparative Literature at The State University of New York at Buffalo). “9. Bare Life.” Impasses of the Post-Global: Theory in the Era of Climate Change, vol. 2. 2012. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/10803281.0001.001/1:11/--impasses-of-the-post-global-theory-in-the-era-of-climate?rgn=div1;view=fulltext

Since bare life is included within Western democracies as their hidden inner ground and as such cannot mark their borders, modern politics is about the search for new racialized and gendered targets of exclusion, for the new living dead (130). In our own times, such targets multiply with astonishing speed and infiltrate bodies down to the cellular level: from refugees, illegal immigrants, inmates on death row subject to suicide watch, comatose patients on life support, to organ transplants and fetal stem cells. For Agamben, this inclusion of bare life within the bodies of each citizen becomes catastrophically apparent with the reversal of the democratic state into totalitarian regimes at the beginning of the 20th century. As the disasters of fascism and soviet totalitarianism demonstrate, and as the continuous histories of genocide show, by suspending political forms of life, **totalitarian regimes can reduce whole populations to disposable bare life that could be destroyed with impunity**. This is what according to Agamben constitutes **the unprecedented horror of Nazi concentration camps**: the extreme destitution and degradation of human life to bare life subject to mass extermination: “Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, the camp was also the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation” (171). If Agamben controversially claims that camps are not just the extreme aberration of modernity but its “fundamental biopolitical paradigm” (181), which shows the “thanatopolitical face” of power (142, 150), it is because concentration camps for the first time actualize the danger implicit in Western politics, namely, the total genocide made possible by the reversal of the exception signified by homo sacer into a new thanato-political norm. Such collapse of the distinction between exception and norm, such transformation of the temporal exception into material space, together with the “absolute” and unmediated subjection of life to death, constitutes **the “supreme” political principle of genocide**.

**The affirmative’s epistemic approach to the topic is one of maintaining sovereign power. The alternative is to reject the 1AC as an epistemic endorsement of Whatever-being – the view that life is important irrespective of qualifiers.**

**Caldwell 4**

Anne Caldwell (Asst Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Louisville) Theory & Event, 7.2

Can we imagine another form of humanity, and another form of power? The bio-sovereignty described by Agamben is so fluid as to appear irresistible. Yet Agamben never suggests this order is necessary.Bio-sovereignty results from a particular and contingent history, andit requires certain conditions. Sovereign power, as Agamben describes it, finds its grounds in specific coordinates of life,which it then places in a relation of indeterminacy.What defies sovereign power is a life that cannot be reduced to those determinations: a life "that can never be separated from its form, alife in which it is never possible to isolate something such as naked life**.** " (2.3). In his earlier Coming Community, Agamben describes this alternative life as "whatever being." More recently he has used the term "forms-of-life." These concepts come from the figure Benjamin proposed as a counter to homo sacer: the "total condition that is 'man'." For Benjamin and Agamben, mere life is the life which unites law and life. That tie permits law, in its endless cycle of violence, to reduce life an instrument of its own power. The total condition that is man refers to an alternative life incapable of serving as the ground of law**.** Such a life would exist outside sovereignty. Agamben's own concept of whatever being is extraordinarily dense. It is made up of varied concepts, including language and potentiality; it is also shaped by several particular dense thinkers, including Benjamin and Heidegger. What follows is only a brief consideration of whatever being, in its relation to sovereign power.      "Whatever being," as described by Agamben, lacks the features permitting the sovereign capture and regulation of life in our tradition**.** Sovereignty's capture of life has been conditional upon the separation of natural and political life. That separation has permitted the emergence of a sovereign power grounded in this distinction, and empowered to decide on the value, and non-value of life (1998: 142).Since then, every further politicization of life, in turn, calls for "a new decision concerning the threshold beyond which life ceases to be politically relevant, becomes only 'sacred life,' and can as such be eliminated without punishment" (p. 139). This expansion of the range of life meriting protection does not limit sovereignty, but provides sites for its expansion. In recent decades, factors that once might have been indifferent to sovereignty become a field for its exercise. Attributes such as national status, economic status, color, race, sex, religion, geo-political position have become the subjects of rights declarations. From a liberal or cosmopolitan perspective, such enumerations expand the range of life protected from and serving as a limit upon sovereignty. Agamben's analysis suggests the contrary. If indeed sovereignty is bio-political before it is juridical, then juridical rights come into being only where life is incorporated within the field of bio-sovereignty. The language of rights, in other words, calls up and depends upon the life caught within sovereignty: homo sacer. Agamben's alternative is therefore radical. He does not contest particular aspects of the tradition. He does not suggest we expand the range of rights available to life. He does not call us to deconstruct a tradition whose power lies in its indeterminate status.21 Instead, he suggests we take leave of the tradition and all its terms. Whatever being is a life that defies the classifications of the tradition, and its reduction of all forms of life to homo sacer. Whatever being therefore has no common ground, no presuppositions, and no particular attributes.It cannot be broken into discrete parts; it has no essence to be separated from its attributes; and it has no common substrate of existence defining its relation to others. Whatever being cannot then be broken down into some common element of life to which additive series of rights would then be attached. Whatever being retains all its properties, without any of them constituting a different valuation of life(1993: 18.9). As a result, whatever being is "reclaimed from its having this or that property, which identifies it as belonging to this or that set, to this or that class (the reds, the French, the Muslims) -- and it is reclaimed not for another class nor for the simple generic absence of any belonging, but for its being-*such*, for belonging itself." (0.1-1.2).Indifferent to any distinction between a ground and added determinations of its essence, whatever being cannot be grasped by a power built upon the separation of a common natural life, and its political specification. Whatever being dissolves the material ground of the sovereign exception and cancels its terms**.** This form of life is less post-metaphysical or anti-sovereign, than a-metaphysical and a-sovereign. Whatever is indifferent not because its status does not matter, but because it has no particular attribute which gives it more value than another whatever being. As Agamben suggests, whatever being is akin to Heidegger's Dasein. Dasein, as Heidegger describes it, is that life which always has its own being as its concern-- regardless of the way any other power might determine its status.Whatever being, in the manner of Dasein, takes the form of an "indissoluble cohesion in which it is impossible to isolate something like a bare life. In the state of exception become the rule, the life of *homo sacer*, which was the correlate of sovereign power, turns into existence over which power no longer seems to have any hold" (Agamben 1998: 153).We should pay attention to this comparison. For what Agamben suggests is that whatever being is not any abstract, inaccessible life, perhaps promised to us in the future. Whatever being, should we care to see it, is all around us, wherever we reject the criteria sovereign power would use to classify and value life**.** "In the final instance the State can recognize any claim for identity -- even that of a State identity within the State . . . What the State cannot tolerate in any way, however, is that the singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without a representable condition of belonging" (Agamben 1993:85.6). At every point where we refusethe distinctions sovereigntyand the state would demand of us, the possibility of a non-state world, made up of whatever life, appears.

### Long NC – Citizenship Link (3:10)

#### Gun control creates a state of exception, where freedom is subordinate to security, and the sovereign resides outside the law in the name of law itself—the state of the exception has become the rule because of the aff’s fear-based politics

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While defined rather ambiguously as “a ‘point of imbalance between public law and political fact’ that is situated – like civil war, insurrection and resistance – in an ‘ambiguous, uncertain, borderline fringe, at the intersection of the legal and the political’” 69 it is quite easily recognized in history as moments where, when facing great crisis, nations have allowed governmental power to supersede rights and liberties of the people in favor of increased power, ostensibly temporary and for the protection of the nation. In a way, declarations of war (including the ‘war on terror’) could be considered states of exception, for the normal laws, codes, and rights of people are suspended and replaced by wartime law and codes which are applied to other nations for the good of world order. 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#### Gun control is fundamentally intertwined with citizenship—the state creates subjects, “good citizens”, to maintain its monopoly on force

**Agger and Luke 15**

Ben Agger (professor of Sociology and Anthropology at UT Arlington) and Timothy Luke (Professor of Political Science at Virginia Tech). Gun Violence and Public Life. Routledge, Google Books. 2015, pg. 19.

Contesting the conditions of gun ownership and use is another facet to “the governmentalization of the state” that paradoxically may express how “the problems of governmentality and the techniques of the state have become the only political issue, the only real space for political struggle and contestation” (Foucault 1993, 103). As the putatively sole possessor of a monopoly on the use of legitimate force within its territory and over its population, the state’s disposition toward guns, gun owners, and gun use must address questions—external and internal to the provenance of states—about such devices for effectuating lethal violence. The answers are vital for state sovereignty and political subjectivity, “since it is the tactics of government which make possible the continual definition and redefinition of what is within the competence of the state and what is not, the public versus the private, and so on; thus the state can only be understood in its survival and its limits on the basis of the general tactics of governmentality” (Foucault 1991, 103). Despite their ties to crime and mass shootings, the implementalities of guns and their use are intertwined with citizenship, subjectivity, and security in the United States. To pretend otherwise will only further mystify the fetishized relations of gun production, consumption, accumulation, and circulation as tools of power for citizens and their magistrates alike.

#### Notions of citizenship produce bare life, reifying sovereign power as a result

**Astor 9**

Avi Astor (Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan). “Unauthorized Immigration, Securitization, and the Making of Operation Wetback.” May 29th, 2009.

Bare life is life that is excluded from the political order. The relation of bare life to the political order, however, is not purely a relation of exteriority. Rather, bare life is the "zone of indistinction" in which political life and natural life "constitute each other in including and excluding each other" (p. 90). Citizenship, the lynchpin of the modern political order, would be meaningless without the presence, whether real or imaginary, of non-citizens. But the role played by non-citizens in constituting the political order is contingent on their exclusion from this order. Agamben sees this exclusive logic as the fatal flaw of the modern nation-state, and attributes the myriad abuses suffered by refugees and denaturalized subjects during the last two centuries to its immanent unfolding. The utility of Agamben's insights derive from their uncanny ability to highlight both the constitutive role that politically marginalized populations play in shaping the modern political order and the logic of their exclusion from this order. They are not excluded simply by virtue of being non-citizens, refugees or stateless persons, but by virtue of being the embodiment of pure life itself, which has no place in the modern political order when decoupled from political existence. Scholars must be cautious, however, not to lose sight of the fact that Agamben's analysis of bare life emerged from his analysis of specific European events, most notably the Holocaust, and therefore may miss unique aspects of the experiences of racism and exclusion in non-European contexts. Hesse (2004), for instance, argues that Agamben's conception of racism is "Eurocentric," as it defines racism as a "relation of exception" and consequently overlooks the ways in which racism is built into social institutions. Taking the Holocaust as the ideal-typical case of biopolitical exclusion, Hesse writes, obscures other experiences of racist exclusion that cannot be assimilated into this paradigm.

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**Ziarek 12**

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**Caldwell 4**

Anne Caldwell (Asst Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Louisville) Theory & Event, 7.2

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That separation has permitted the emergence of a sovereign power grounded in this distinction, and empowered to decide on the value, and non-value of life (1998: 142).Since then, every further politicization of life, in turn, calls for "a new decision concerning the threshold beyond which life ceases to be politically relevant, becomes only 'sacred life,' and can as such be eliminated without punishment" (p. 139). This expansion of the range of life meriting protection does not limit sovereignty, but provides sites for its expansion. In recent decades, factors that once might have been indifferent to sovereignty become a field for its exercise. Attributes such as national status, economic status, color, race, sex, religion, geo-political position have become the subjects of rights declarations. From a liberal or cosmopolitan perspective, such enumerations expand the range of life protected from and serving as a limit upon sovereignty. Agamben's analysis suggests the contrary. 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## NC Shell v K Teams

### NC

**Sovereign power operates by drawing distinctions between forms of life. This culminates in all life becoming bare life, the sovereign exception becoming the norm, inclusion by virtue of exclusion. Identity politics relies on the same logic of sovereign power, enabling the state to co-opt movements at every turn.**

**Edkins 7**

Dr. Jenny Edkins (Professor of International Politics MA (Oxon) St Anne’s College, University of Oxford MSc The City University, London BA (Hons) The Open University PhD University of Wales, Aberystwyth). “Whatever Politics”. In Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life, eds. Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCarolli. 2007. Pgs. 74-76, Google Books.

The reasons why this might be the case are elaborated in Homo Sacer, which discusses how the sovereign state, and indeed sovereign power in any form, operates through the drawing of distinctions between forms of life. In contradistinction to Michel Foucault’s contention that biopolitics emerged in the eighteenth century, with “the emergence of the problem of population,” as a form of governance distinct from sovereignty, Agmben argues that “the production of a biopolitical body is the originary activity of sovereign power” (HS, 6). In other words, “biopolitics is at least as old as the sovereign exception” (HS, 6). The “protagonist” of the book is bare life, the form of subjectivity or personhood produced by, and captured in, sovereign power (HS, 8). The basic argument is well rehearsed now in diverse contexts, including a number of writings in international politics. Sovereign power, since its inception, has operated through the distinction of bare life (zoe), the life of the home (oikos), and politically qualified life (bios), the life of the public sphere (polis). The structure of the sovereign ban, or the state of exception, is such that bare life is included in the sovereign sphere precisely through its exclusion from it. The life set outside the law is nevertheless subject to and of the law through the very (legal) process of the setting outside of that life. **Bare life in such a state of inclusive exclusion is described as homo sacer, a form of life that can be killed without accusations of homicide but that cannot be sacrificed.** This life excluded from the polis initially inhabits zones of indistinction between fact and law, zones such as the Nazi concentration camp; later such zones of indistinction come to extend beyond the camp. At this point, **the exception becomes the norm and all life becomes bare life**; life under the sway of sovereign power in the contemporary world is no longer politically qualified. Crucial to the whole process, and to its apparent unassailability, is the way in which **bare life or homo sacer is both the object of sovereign power and the subject of democratic attempts to hold that power to account**, first through citizens’ rights and democratic accountability, then through human rights and humanitarianism. This means that humanitarianism and sovereignty, to pick on one pairings as an example, share a “secret solidarity”: “Humanitarian organisations can only grasp human life in the figure of bare or sacred life, and therefore, despite themselves, maintain a secret solidarity with the very powers they ought to fight” (HS, 133). Both sovereign power and that which presents itself as opposed to it take bare life as their object of subject. At this point, it becomes possible to see why **a coming politics, if it is to be other than a sovereign politics, cannot be a form of identity or social movement politics**. Such politics rely on the drawing of lines or the making of distinctions similar to those drawn by sovereign power. As such, they form part of the same logic, a logic of sovereignty that separates this and that according to their supposedly distinct qualities. **Sovereign power is happy to negotiate the boundaries of the distinctions that it makes; what it could not tolerate would be the refusal to make any distinctions of this sort.**

#### The attachment to victimhood underlying identity politics makes effective resistance to oppression impossible

**Enns 7**

Dr. Diane Enns (Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Associate Director of the Institute on Globalization and the Human Condition, at McMaster University, Canada). “Identity and Victimhood.” 2007. http://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Papers/Occasional\_Papers/boc28e.pdf

I have argued that an ethical attitude has been developing in certain fields of scholarship and Western culture more generally, and perhaps globally, in which the concern for the trauma and suffering of the victim has assumed such overwhelming significance that both the power and responsibility of the victim are denied.89 In the process it seems we have, at times, abdicated politics for ethics. The solutions to conflict cannot be sought in compassion for the suffering of victims, but in politics. How do we negotiate the need for compassion and understanding with the need for political transformation and justice? In order to do this we need to go beyond the recognition of suffering and the acknowledgement of victimization. We need to break out of the world view of the victim and the perpetrator, for an attachment to victimhood is an attachment to the very divisions instigated and perpetuated by those in need of stabilizing their rule. If the politicization and institutionalization of identity categories are responsible for violent conflict, then most promising for an alternative political future—one in which vulnerability to the other and a “dialogue-based dispute culture” are fundamental—are those visions and practices that struggle to create a community and politics founded on other relationships besides those tied to absolutist notions of identity. Mamdani’s articulation of a justice as survival is one such approach. Suggesting that groups be allowed to come to the negotiating table with only one criterion, that they lay down their arms, may seem utopian, but it quite concretely calls for another kind of disarmament: namely, the “laying down” of ideologies associated with this particular identity or that. The fact that many observers and scholars of violent conflict follow Mamdani’s lead reveals the extent to which identity politics has harmed the globe, which is why I find it important to bring this discussion to bear on academic debates in North America regarding an emancipatory politics that is considered necessary and unrelated to violent struggles elsewhere. These identity politics have also led to divisiveness, and in the context of feminism, what Ranjana Khanna calls “separate ethical universes,” produced by the reification of difference and effectively silencing any comment on another context.90 In the name of “cultural sensitivity” and the incommensurability of the other, the divide between identity groups widens, and understanding diminishes. In a discussion of the “instabilities” of truth and reconciliation within the sites of theater and public culture, Rustom Bharucha notes that, the politics of identity can catalyze, metabolize, and disrupt the hierarchies of any given society, but there is no guarantee that in this process new hierarchies are unlikely to emerge, or that reconciliation across older divides is likely to be stabilized. To seek reconciliation beyond the constraints of specific identity constructions, we need to do more than posit the multiple or hybrid identities that have become postmodern tropes. Perhaps we need to counter the very concept of ‘identity’ with the enigmas of the ‘self’…91 This is where conflict management practices don’t appear to reach far enough, assuming, as they often do, that identity is natural and fundamental to human experience. But conflict management is caught up in the crisis of the day, in emergency measures, and unable to indulge in the luxury of theoretical creations of enigmatic selves. When faced with two hostile parties, each rooted staunchly in a historical and ideological understanding of who they are, who can speak of enigmatic selves that counter the very concept of identity?92 The gap between theory and practice must always be negotiated. We need both emergency measures and preventative measures, which explains my own ambivalence towards the “dialogue industry.” Here we seem to glimpse a different future through the discovery of commonalities among human beings who have been taught to hate each other. What better way to prevent future antagonism? It seems in keeping with the kind of sentiments Boris Buden shares when he states unequivocally that truth commissions and organized reconciliation processes are not what the people of the former Yugoslavia need. Rather, what they need is to “invent a new form of political solidarity, one that goes beyond their national, ethnic, cultural, and religious identities, if they really want to build new bridges toward each other over the mass graves and ruins.93 For conflict management practice to effectively deal with what we might call a new terrain—not only due to the increase in ethnopolitical violence but also because of increasing claims to the status of victimhood—it must work to arrest the transition from a mere cultural identity to a politicized identity, as well as stall the transition from the empowerment of the victim to the victim’s call for violent retribution. A tall order to be sure, but recent attention to multi-track diplomacy, to both psychological and political approaches, and above all to the historical and socio-political conditions of every site of conflict, seem to point in the right direction. The most difficult challenge is to know at what point the victim must let go of victimhood, sacrifice the tremendous need for recognition and reparation, even when it is known that victimization robs individuals and communities of something that will never be returned or repaid, and never fully repaired. Frantz Fanon, who gave us probably the best description of what it means to be victimized by colonization and who witnessed its festering wounds as a psychiatrist in French colonized Algeria, refused victimhood. In Black Skin, White Masks (1962) he outlines the task of the native to “disalienate” himself. It is accomplished neither in the celebration of a black identity, nor in the attempt to be white, for both of these are projects defined within the framework of white colonialism. In other words, Fanon refuses the world view of the cat or the rat, for both are products of an oppressive regime. As a man of colour he does not claim the right to hope the white man will feel guilt, the right to destroy white pride, to claim reparations, or to “cry out [his] hatred at the white man.”94 The only right Fanon does claim is “that of demanding human behavior from the other.”95 It is a profound statement about the bare bones of political community; the responsibility one has to the other, both to demand and to bestow human consideration—compassion and political judgment—to the other on the basis of a shared life and world, rather than on recognition for the other’s identity. He refuses to accept the “amputation” of victimhood.96 Coming from one who knew intimately the traumas of the colonized, Fanon’s words are a provocative and inspiring call to rethink both politics and community.

#### Politics sustains itself through exclusion, there’s no hope for the aff’s reformism. The dangerous modern combination of biopolitics and bare life leads to governmental management which bedrocks in structural violence towards those that don’t fit the sovereign’s narrative of who is a proper citizen.

**Ziarek 12**

Ewa Ziarek (Julian Park Professor of Comparative Literature at The State University of New York at Buffalo). “9. Bare Life.” Impasses of the Post-Global: Theory in the Era of Climate Change, vol. 2. 2012. http://quod.lib.umich.edu/o/ohp/10803281.0001.001/1:11/--impasses-of-the-post-global-theory-in-the-era-of-climate?rgn=div1;view=fulltext

Since bare life is included within Western democracies as their hidden inner ground and as such cannot mark their borders, modern politics is about the search for new racialized and gendered targets of exclusion, for the new living dead (130). In our own times, such targets multiply with astonishing speed and infiltrate bodies down to the cellular level: from refugees, illegal immigrants, inmates on death row subject to suicide watch, comatose patients on life support, to organ transplants and fetal stem cells. For Agamben, this inclusion of bare life within the bodies of each citizen becomes catastrophically apparent with the reversal of the democratic state into totalitarian regimes at the beginning of the 20th century. As the disasters of fascism and soviet totalitarianism demonstrate, and as the continuous histories of genocide show, by suspending political forms of life, totalitarian regimes can reduce whole populations to disposable bare life that could be destroyed with impunity. This is what according to Agamben constitutes the unprecedented horror of Nazi concentration camps: the extreme destitution and degradation of human life to bare life subject to mass extermination: “Insofar as its inhabitants were stripped of every political status and wholly reduced to bare life, the camp was also the most absolute biopolitical space ever to have been realized, in which power confronts nothing but pure life, without any mediation” (171). If Agamben controversially claims that camps are not just the extreme aberration of modernity but its “fundamental biopolitical paradigm” (181), which shows the “thanatopolitical face” of power (142, 150), it is because concentration camps for the first time actualize the danger implicit in Western politics, namely, the total genocide made possible by the reversal of the exception signified by homo sacer into a new thanato-political norm. Such collapse of the distinction between exception and norm, such transformation of the temporal exception into material space, together with the “absolute” and unmediated subjection of life to death, constitutes the “supreme” political principle of genocide.

**The alternative is whatever being, a form of life that does not belong to a community on the basis of a particular identity, but being as it is. Only the alt, never the aff, can disrupt the fundamental logic of sovereign power**

**Edkins 7**

Dr. Jenny Edkins (Professor of International Politics MA (Oxon) St Anne’s College, University of Oxford MSc The City University, London BA (Hons) The Open University PhD University of Wales, Aberystwyth). “Whatever Politics”. In Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life, eds. Matthew Calarco and Steven DeCarolli. 2007. Pgs. 74-76, Google Books.

In The Coming Community Agamben writes: “The coming being is whatever being” (CC, 1; my emphasis). Here “whatever” is “that which is neither particular nor general, individual nor generic” (CC, 107). **Whatever being is being such as it is, with all its properties.** In other words, to use terms that occur later in Agamben’s writings, it is immaterial whether whatever being is human or inhuman, politically qualified or excluded. But there is more to it than that. Whatever being is “reclaimed” or “freed” (CC, 1) from the dilemma of the universal and the particular; the question of its belonging or not to a class or set becomes irrelevant, as do the paradoxes of belonging (CC, 9). Instead, whatever being or being-such “which remains constantly hidden in the condition of belonging” to the nation, to humanity, to a class, “comes to light” as such (CC, 2). Agamben elaborates: “Love is never directed toward this or that property of the loved one (being blond, being small, being tender, being lame), but neither does it neglect the properties in favor of an insipid generality (universal love): The lover wants the loved one with all of its predicated, its being such as it is” (CC, 2). Whatever being or whatever singularity implies desire, a desire of the “as only insofar as it is such” (CC, 2). The question that then arises for Agamben is: what form of politics could be conceived that would provide for whatever being, for being such as it is, or, in other words, “what could be the politics of whatever singularity?” (CC, 85). Whatever being is “a being whose community is mediated not by any condition of belonging..nor by the simple absence of conditions...but by belonging itself” (CC, 85). The community of whatever singularities is not based on a sharing of properties (“being red, being Italian, being communist”), but neither is it an absence of such shared properties, “a negative community” (CC, 85). **It is a community of singularities who share nothing more than their singularity, their being-such** or their “whatever-ness” as such. The coming politics, as a politics of whatever being, is not then the same as a politics of social movements or an identity politics; it is not “a simple affirmation of the social in opposition to the state” (CC, 86). According to Agamben, it seems that social movements either share a call for the recognition of particular claims or demands (the environmental movement, the anti-Apartheid movement), or are formed explicitly on the basis of a claim to shared identity (feminist, gay, black). **Whatever singularities cannot form a social movement of this type because “they do not possess any identity to vindicate or any bond of belonging for which to seek recognition”** (CC, 86). There is considerable discussion in the literature as to whether social movements or identity politics do in practice require or imply such forms of belonging, or to what extent they entail, rather, an articulation of a form of counter-hegemony or political frontier for temporary strategic political purposes. There is significant debate about the implications for practices of inclusion and exclusion that are entailed. However, Agamben’s more important point here seems to be the larger one that states “can recognize any claim for identity...in the final instance” (CC, 86). Such a claim is a demand for inclusion in or recognition by the state, not a claim that contests or disrupts the notions of inclusion and exclusion upon which sovereign power depends. The state has to have a form of belonging that affirms an identity, and it may be that any identity, even a temporary strategic one, will do; indeed, perhaps even an identity as human. What sovereign power “cannot tolerate” is “that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging,” or “that singularities form a community without affirming an identity” (CC, 86). In other words, “**the possibility of the whatever itself being taken up without an identity is a threat the state cannot come to terms with**” (CC, 86).

**The coming community is based on this notion of whatever being—our politics should be grounded on being-in-language**

**Bos 5**

Rene ten Bos (professor at the Radboud University, AOG School of Management core teacher). “Giorgio Agamben and the community without identity.” 2005. <http://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/46240/46240.pdf?sequence=1>

Contrary to classical definitions of [hu]man as the speaking animal, Agamben insists that it is not the capacity for language that makes him/her [them] a unique creature but rather the ability to make language visible by silencing it. And it is only this ability – the ability to isolate the rose from the language of nature and hence to turn it into a mute object – that allows [hu]man to become object-oriented or, to use Heidegger’s terminology, world-forming. Animals are not world-forming in this sense simply because they are ‘withheld’ by the ongoing chatter that makes up nature (2004: 53). We can now understand what Agamben has in mind when he argues that **it is the task of the coming philosophy to present us the idea of language**. This task implies nothing less than an ongoing commitment to show what all human beings have in common – their linguistic openness to the world – and therefore to show the humanity of all human beings (including those who are excluded). That we can all speak is what ultimately matters much more than the quid about which or from which we are supposed to speak. Agamben (2000b: 116; 1999a: 66) refers to the fact that there is speaking or that there are speakers as the factum loquendi and philosophy should be concerned with this fact. It is therefore very different from a science such as linguistics which tries to identify the real properties of language in order to determine the essence of language. The philosopher’s task, on the other hand, is ‘exhausted in the presentation of the existence of language’ (1999a: 67) and in doing this, she or he attempts to ‘define categories and modalities in such a way that being is not presupposed but rather exposed’ (1999a: 76, emphasis added). Community and happiness Agamben’s central claim is that both community and tradition find their condition of possibility in the factum loquendi, in the ‘sayability’ of language, in **our-being-in-language**. More accurately, the presupposition of language, which resides in its ‘sayability’, is in fact the very structure of tradition and community. It is only by means of language that we are able to presuppose, to pass on, to convey and, indeed, to ‘betray the thing itself in language, so that language may speak about something’ (1999a: 35). In Agamben’s opinion, **it is the ‘sayability’ of language that is betrayed in tradition and community rather than who we are**, where we are, and so on. ‘Tradition’ and ‘betrayal’ are words with a similar etymological origin which is related to the verb ‘to pass on’. Agamben wants us to understand that tradition as he sees it does not pass on a belonging to this or that group, nation, soil, God, class, or municipality. **It rather passes on the plain fact that we can speak and hence can be open to other speakers and can be open to the entire world.** Any conceptualization of tradition or community that does not acknowledge this openness indeed invokes an appeal to substance, classification, organization, or any other kind of ‘container’ and must betray tradition as well as the community of all human beings. In this sense, the philosopher’s task is profoundly political: by bringing the thing itself into language and by constantly reminding us about what this thing itself is, she or he [they] contributes to the tradition and community of all (rather than a few) human beings. The philosopher can thus be seen – in a very special sense of the word – as the protector of a universal tradition. It is not a property, a nature, a voice, a vision, or, indeed, a particular language that unites human beings in this tradition but the ‘vision of language itself and therefore the experience of language’s limits, its end’. And, having arrived at this point, so to speak at the end of language, Agamben adds that ‘a true community can only be a community that is not presupposed’ (1999a: 47). But what does this mean? How are we to conceive of a community without a particular vision or voice, without any reference to a provenance or descent? In another book crucial for his understanding of community, Language and Death: The Place of Negativity (1991), Agamben makes clear that he is driven by a desire to eliminate all negativity from conceptualizations of community and tradition, a negativity that he locates in the myths of immanentism that prevail in contemporary politics. It is the state, the nation, or the capitalistic organization that preserves from language only a voice which functions as the myth that must include by excluding and exclude by including. Bush: ‘You are either for us or against us.’ **This voice, magical as it may be, finds its sole source of inspiration in nihilism and negativity**. The point of Agamben’s intervention in the debate about community becomes now clear: he wants to silence this voice of negativity that permeates not only our thinking on communities but also these communities as praxis (1991: 94–95) and, in order to do this, he tries to think the thing itself of language rather than a particular language that comes from somewhere or that has a distinct identity. The coming politics to which his philosophy of language opens a perspective is **therefore a fight not only against American hegemony but also against the nation-state** and, I would like to add, against all organization and management. More accurately, it is a fight between humanity and state/organization – and humanity is understood here not in terms of people who have inalienable human rights but in terms of singularities that ‘cannot form a societas because they cannot possess any identity to vindicate nor any bond of belonging for which they seek recognition’ (1993a: 86). What is important for the state and its organizations, is that all these ‘singularities’ – which Agamben defines as beings such as they are, that is, as beings that are ‘indifferent with respect to a common property’ (1993a: 1) – cannot be accepted as such and should be either included in some ‘representable identity’ or be violently excluded or banned in nowhere lands (camps, seas, limbos, asylums, forests, and so on) (1993a: 86). Singularities, that what people are when they are not subordinated into classes or sets, are the State’s principal enemies and wherever these singularities will come to the fore and demonstrate their ‘being-in-common’, **which happened, for example, on Tiananmen Square** in Beijing 1989, but which is also happening every day at the borders of our countries where the gathering of refugees puts the very concept of a border or a nation-state into question – weapons will appear sooner rather than later. Agamben’s radical claim is that **philosophy should take sides with these singularities** and should reflect the most general being-in-common of human people. It should try to make thresholds visible everywhere, even in the system that is based on dangerous mystifications. This implies a kind of reflection that religion, science, and politics, as they are currently practiced, cannot provide anymore. There is no doubt that this philosophical endeavour betrays a certain political hubris, but it is a hubris that feeds itself not only from a profound solidarity with the repressed and the banned but also from an understanding that a crucial task of philosophy has always been quite simply to ponder the possibilities of a happy life, a life that is not guaranteed any more by a politics of sovereignty that of necessity resorts to violence and exclusion when challenged (2000b: 114–115). Agamben’s philosophy makes us aware that this old task – reflecting happiness – is not to be banned to the domain called Lebenskunst (the art of life), as if this is an area that can be nicely isolated from the areas of production and work and therefore from politics itself; on the contrary, this ancient task is to be rehabilitated by allowing it to take once more a central place in political thought. Only when we understand that politics and art of life are not separated anymore, only when we see that politics is intimately related with what happens when people are not subjected to working organizations and are in this sense inactive (2000b: 141; see also Nancy, 1991: 31, 72–74 and Wall, 1999: 87, 132), are we able to grasp that politics is about happiness and the manifold ways that we communicate about this.